

## Stephen and Angelina Cowan

**FEBRUARY 2021**

Location: **Tuum, KENYA**

Mission: **Church-based community development and outreach**



It was great to meet Angelina and Annessa in Nairobi after their 10 months stay in Ireland. From Covid tests and bubbles to life here with few restrictions, it did take some adjusting. Annessa with all other students has returned to the classroom after two weeks of virtual learning within the school compound and we have returned to Tuum. The further north we travelled, signs of covid restrictions decreased.

We keep reminding people here that the virus has not gone away and preventative measures can keep it at bay. Social distancing is often not observed. Last night the Manchester United vs Liverpool game created lots of excitement and cheering in the village as people crowded around a satellite connected TV screen. This morning a wedding is taking place in the neighbouring village and the community will celebrate with large numbers. These are the contrasting responses to the pandemic within Kenya.

We have been joined by two new graduate volunteers from the organisation called iServe Africa. Saidimu is a Maasai man, so language will not be a problem and Faith is from the western region of Kenya. Each will demonstrate their passion for the gospel in their own unique way. They will be joined by another student, Sylvia who has trained in USA in mechanical engineering and who wants to gain experience working in a rural area.

All schools in Kenya have restarted from the beginning of January. The return rate in Tuum Girls' Secondary School was quite high. Some pupils have not returned due to pregnancy, but new students have enrolled. In boys' schools, quite a number have decided to be morans

(warriors) and leave formal education.

One of our biggest educational challenges is due to some who have already received education being more focused on enhancing cultural practices rather than promoting the change to which they have been exposed and from which they have benefitted. This confuses the local population. It also affects how the change the gospel seeks to bring is interpreted as people have lost respect for some leaders saying one thing and doing another. Education certainly helps with understanding but it reminds us that the gospel is not taught but received by revelation from Jesus Christ. Galatians 1 v 12.



*Photo: Participants at the February Bible teaching and staff training seminar*

### Prayer points

- Give thanks for new personnel and opportunities to talk about the gospel.
- Pray for the gospel focus of project work to be seen during the Presbytery visit, from 9 to 12 February.
- Give thanks for the good attendance at the ongoing Bible teaching and staff training seminar.